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OR
HON. STEPHEN B. PACKARD
AT
THE REPUBLICAN MASS MEETING
FOR THE RATIFICATION OF
THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL AND STATE TICKETS.
MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, NEW ORLEANS, JULY 10, 1876.

SPEECH OF HON. STEPHEN B. PACKARD.

Fellow Citizens,

I rejoice to see the enthusiasm with which you have numerously assembled to ratify your State ticket. You have a good platform, that consists in every respect with your national platform, and have selected candidates who mean, as in the past, to do their whole duty to you and to your fellow-citizens, irrespective of party.

It is not my purpose at this time to present a thorough analysis of the platform adopted by your late Republican convention. I endorse it. My views accord with the principles therein set forth. To a few of its leading features I will refer.

SPECIE RESUMPTION.

Our party is pledged, as heretofore, to a speedy resumption of specie payment, and in entering the present national contest, resorts to no subtleties in its platform, nor to any barter between sections by which they are each represented in a candidate standing upon a directly opposite basis. The Republican party stands unqualifiedly by its past avowals in convention, and *in fact* to its legislation in Congress as a guarantee that it will surrender none of its pledges.

PROTECTION TO SUGAR AND RICE.

It is reasonably a matter of serious solicitude to the citizen of Louisiana engaged in the *sugar and rice culture*, that their protection be jealously maintained, as in the past by the Republican party. The national Democratic platform declares that "all Customhouse taxation shall be only for revenue." It also uses the following emphatic language: "We denounce the present tariff levied upon nearly 4000 articles as a masterpiece of injustice, inequality and false pretense." That platform was in every part ratified here by Democrats at their late mass meeting in Lafayette Square with total disregard of these two important interests. The language of our platform is not ambiguous upon this subject, to wit: "A system of revenue, taxation and assessment which, while it shall provide ample means to meet the public expenditures and obli-

gations, shall also assume the protection of certain national interests against the destructive competition of foreign productions; especially insisting that the capital and labor employed in the production of the national staples of sugar and rice *should be included among articles entitled to such protection*." What say the sugar and rice planters to the Hawaiian treaty? The free trade Democracy in the House of Representatives *repealed this duty* on Sandwich Island sugar and rice, and thus, by implication, on these articles as the product of other nations, with which we have reciprocal duties. This treaty, if ratified by the remission of duties on sugar and rice, would have entitled sugar and rice, produced in Hawaii by servile labor to be brought here free of duty, and thus come in competition with the same articles produced here. Sugar and rice culture has been fostered and encouraged by Congress in past years, but let the Democratic party get into power, and with its views and under its platform it will speedily remove the duty now exacted upon the importation of both sugar and rice. Thus it will destroy these great national interests, bring the capital and labor devoted to the production of these staples into competition with the capital and slave labor of foreign countries. A speaker at the recent Democratic mass meeting, ratifying the national platform and candidates, characterized Tilden as the great "smasher." I submit to the candid judgment of those who have invested their capital and those who contribute their labor to the growing of sugar and rice, that if Tilden should be elected whether with all his "smashing," he and his party will not effectually smash this "sugar bowl" of the Union.

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

Louisiana wants an equitable proportion of the money appropriated annually for internal improvements. A Republican Congress gave us appropriations for the Atchafalaya, Calcasieu, Ouachita, Tangipahoa and Red River; also for the great work of securing deep water at the mouth of the Missis-



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sippi river. More money was applied for purposes of commerce by the three Republican Congresses preceding the present, than for the preceding thirty years under Democratic rule. What will be the record of the present House? It is believed that it can be truthfully said that nothing will be awarded for similar and needed improvements. Our levees should be the subject of federal aid. The maintenance of the levees costs the tax-payers of the State one-half more than do the schools, over one-half as much as the interest on the public debt of the State, and nearly as much as the entire executive, judicial and legislative departments of the State government. Our State needs moreover a railroad to Texas. Consistently with the traditions of the Democratic party, nothing can not be expected from that quarter in aid of works of this character. And it is a matter of grave consideration for Louisiana, whether a presidential candidate from New York—a State which has long combated the Western channels southward of trade—will not be more apt to encourage a policy to befriend the great metropolis of that State than will his Western competitor who has long and vigorously sought to multiply such channels in the common interest of both the South and West. This consideration derives especial force from the recent platform of the national Democratic party, which denounces such national encouragement as "a profligate waste." The Republican party, by its liberal appropriations in behalf of railroads, harbors and rivers, the commercial highways of the nation, has long been and still is committed to the wise policy of opening to commerce and agriculture the broad acres of the West and Southwest.

PEACE AND ORDER.

It is idle to ever expect an established peace within the borders of our State until both parties shall unite in a common and determined remonstrance against the license with which loyal citizens are beset with violence. The Republican party of the nation has by statute sought to repress this vice, and it becomes every good citizen to conserve the true interests of Louisiana and his own, by joining to maintain the laws. No commonwealth which suffers such crimes to go unpunished deserves or can expect a solidly founded prosperity. Every resource

of the executive office, should I enter it, shall be employed to this vital end, and if the Democracy here should observe their recent national pledges of "absolute acquiescence in the will of the majority," and "devotion to the constitution of the United States, with its amendments, as a final settlement," there would be little reason for the alarm, announced in our State platform, that "grave national dangers demand the enactment of such additional laws and the enforcement of such a policy as shall secure to every citizen of the United States, in fact as well as in name, the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, irrespective of his political views, and irrespective of race, color or previous condition of servitude."

Our party desires no mischievous feuds and alienations among a people that should be one in all the purposes of an American State.

THE TRUE POLICY OF ADMINISTRATION.

It is proper for me briefly to define the policy which will govern me in the administration of the office of chief magistrate of the State, if elected thereto.

1. PROTECTION TO LIFE AND PROPERTY. This will follow a determined and impartial execution of the laws.

2. RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE AND GOOD FEELING BETWEEN THE RACES, which will follow the inauguration of an administration, conceded to be elected and having the confidence and support of all classes. A good administration with undisputed title, is always competent to command confidence.

3. THE CONTINUED REDUCTION OF EXPENSES of the State government, begun by the administration.

4. ESPECIALLY A REDUCTION IN THE EXPENSES OF ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION OF TAXES, the introduction of such a system as will DIMINISH THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS, and guarantee relief from ERROGEOUS OR UNJUST VALUATION OF PROPERTY ASSESSED; in other words, an equitable assessment, and an honest but vigorous collection of the taxes from the rich as well as from the poor. Were the delinquent tax-payer promptly to discharge his duties the burdens would rest less heavily upon the more faithful citizen.

5. THE FUNDING ACT has been most beneficial and has brought relief to a tax-ridden and bankrupt State. It has reduced the

bunded debt of the State from over \$22,000,000 to an amount when all fundable obligations are presented, of less than \$12,000,000. It has reduced the State taxes from twenty one and one-half to fourteen and one-half mills, and the parish taxes in like proportion. It will be my duty, as it will be my choice, to carry forward this beneficent financial measure to the end that taxes may be further reduced each year and the debt be constantly diminished until finally extinguished. The faith of the State will thus be kept, while the burdens of the present taxation will be speedily lightened.

WE MUST HAVE A PEACEABLE ELECTION.

The manner in which I have discharged the duties in the responsible public positions which I have held in Louisiana entitles me to the confidence and trust of the good people of the State, that an administrator of rigid economy and a faithful and impartial execution of the laws will follow my election. We must have a peaceable election. On the part of the Republicans there should be the utmost forbearance toward those black men who may wish to organize and vote with the Democratic party. They should not be subjected to any interference with their rights as citizens and voters. Their opinions are their own property. Republicans must be prepared to exact the same freedom and tolerance from the Democrats in organizing and in voting their ticket. We are entitled to protection, if needed, from the federal administration.

This is a right as old as the history of the republic. From the time that President Washington suppressed the insurrection in Pennsylvania down to the hour when upon the application of Governor Wise, a President dispatched troops to Virginia to arrest the John Brown raid; nay, down to the later hour when a President ordered a

detachment of troops from Baton Rouge to the New Orleans Customhouse after the requisition of a collector of the port in 1859, the authority to exercise this right was much challenged, where the State authorities were unable to maintain the public peace. We desire to have a peaceful and good natured contest at the ballot box, that the utmost fairness may characterize every phase of the canvass, and that the minority next November may yield a graceful acquiescence in the choice of a majority.

I am aware that a considerable measure of acrimony characterizes political canvasses, but I have here to say that while I shall firmly stand for your rights, I shall not forget that the duty of a gentleman is an essential element of good citizenship, and shall compete for the popular suffrage with my antagonist, be he who he may, in such a way as to forfeit neither his respect nor my own.

I expect that the active partisans of the Democracy equally to comply with the demands of good manners. The candidates of the Republican party of the nation and the State should receive the votes of those who desire the aid of the federal government to build up our levees, to construct our railroads, to open the highways of commerce; of those who deprecate violence, who would have justice swiftly overtake the red-handed assassin, reeking with the blood of his victim, who would break down and eradicate the unreasoning prejudice of such as ostracise men for opinion's sake; of those who desire a wide establishment and maintenance of a salutary public school system; and finally, of those who believe that every man whose guarantees are lodged in the constitution, is a member of the civil brotherhood of Louisiana, and entitled to equal consideration. If elected, I shall esteem myself the servant of THE WHOLE PEOPLE of Louisiana.

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